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IX. The Divinity of the Soul (Self)

In Chapter II. The Atman, the divinity of the Soul (Self) is explained in detail from the Advaita Vedanta standpoint. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) asked, “What is the soul of man? There was one party who held that there is a Being, God, and an infinite number of souls besides, who are eternally separate from God in essence, and form, and everything. This is dualism.... The answer given by another party was that the soul was a part of the infinite Divine Existence. Just as this body is a little world by itself, and behind it is the mind or thought, and behind that is the individual soul, similarly, the whole world is a body, and behind that is the Universal Mind, and behind that is the Universal Soul. Just as this body is a portion of the Universal Body, so this mind is a portion of the Universal Mind, and the soul of man a portion of the Universal Soul. This is what is called the Vishistadvaita, qualified monism.”¹ In this chapter the divinity of the soul will be discussed from the standpoint of Qualified Nondualism (or Monism) and theistic Dualism. While the traditional term used is Soul, some modern thinkers might prefer the word Self.

For the divinity of the Soul (Self) we have three explanations (Nondualistic, Qualified Nondualistic, and Dualistic). Also, the *Upanishads* having been interpreted from each of these three standpoints by Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva respectively. Epistemologically Dualism and the reality of the empirical world is a self-evident fact from the standpoint of the human intellect and the five senses; and Nondualism from the standpoint of Nirguna Brahman. Each interpretation is valid from its own particular perspective and level of discourse. The Atman is the Highest Reality for the Nondualist, for a Qualified Nondualist we are a

fragment of the Reality, and for the Dualist our true Self is the image of the Personal Brahman-God within us.

All of the aspects of the Reality cannot be conceptually conceived of at the same time. Consequently, each theory separately accounts for some but not all of Brahman-God's aspects. Therefore, following the Principle of Complementarity, nondualism, qualified nondualism, and dualism are three complementary descriptions of Reality. Each has a limited range of application and thus all three are required to yield a full understanding of existence. Whenever one of these three claims to be the only truth, problems arise. Liberation-salvation can be obtained by following any one of these three paths. Some Advaitists might take the position that all three are real, but only Nondualism deals with Ultimate Reality.

To give an example, Brahman-God's infinity and eternity have been explained as transcending space and time (Nondualistically), or as encompassing infinite space and time (dualistically, theistically). Origen and Gregory of Nyssa teach the Biblical doctrine that all people were created in the image and likeness of God. From a theistic dualistic perspective within space, time, and causality this is our true Self. "Verily, not for the sake of the husband, my dear, is the husband loved, but he is loved for the sake of the Self [Atman]. Verily, not for the sake of the wife, my dear, is the wife loved, but she is loved for the sake of the Self" (Br. Up. 2:4.5; 4:5.6). For a theistic dualist the husband and wife love one another because of the image and likeness of God within them, their true Self.

A fundamental principle of religion is that we are alienated from our higher Self. The results of this alienation include a feeling of powerlessness that through our own behavior we are unable to control our destiny and cannot attain the level of happiness we seek. That to some extent life's activities become meaningless without purpose. The results can be normlessness when the norms controlling human behavior are no longer followed; a sense of isolation from others and oneself; and self-estrangement, being a stranger to oneself and the inability of the individual to find self-rewarding activity.² Conversely, meditation and a spiritual life result in a feeling of power, meaningfulness, living a moral life, unification with the Divine, and self-integration.

Indian: "They are in Me, and I too am in them" (BG 9:29). "He who sees the Supreme Lord abiding alike in all beings" (BG 13:27; cf. 5:19;

6:31; 8:22; 13:32; 15:11; 17:6; Mun. Up. 2:2.11). “That man who, by the light of knowledge, beholds all creatures to be like unto my [the Lord’s] own personality, and serve them as such is a wise one....

Understanding that I reside in all bodies, the person who always meditates upon Me, is surely delivered from the evil habit of malice, haughtiness, entertaining disregard for others.... By virtue of knowledge that a person acquires from the consciousness of the presence of God everywhere, all the things of the universe are supposed by him to be identical with the Supreme Spirit. By this universal God-vision he is also delivered from all doubts ... Of all the actions, those that are performed by one who believes in my presence in all created beings with the whole of his heart, speech, and the varied sensibilities, are considered to be the most judicious” *Bhagavatam* (11:29.11-18).³

New Testament: “The Kingdom of God is within you” (Lk. 17:21, KJ). “In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (Jn. 14:20). “He who abides in me, and I in Him, He it is that bears much fruit” (Jn. 15:5; cf. 6:56, 15:4). “Yet He [God] is not far from each one of us, for ‘In Him we live and move and have our being’” (Acts 17:28). “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? ... For God’s temple is holy, and that temple you are” (1 Cor. 3:16-17). “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?” (1 Cor. 6:19; cf. 2 Cor. 6:16; 2 Tim. 1:14). “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor. 3:17; cf. Phil. 1:19). “Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20; cf. Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:27). “One God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:6; Col. 3:11). “We abide in Him [God] and He in us, because He has given us of his own Spirit” (1 Jn. 4:13; cf. 3:24; Jn. 17:21-23).

1. Qualified Nondualism (Monism)

A. The Soul (Self) as a Part (Fragment) of Divinity

According to Shankara (c. 688/788-720/820) all people are part of the universal: spirit body (Ishvara), subtle body (mind body, thought body) and physical body (Virat). Ishvara as the Universal Spirit is the unity of all individual causal bodies. “All the individual beings delimited by their senses become united in Hiranyagarbha [Cosmic Self], inhabiting the world of Brahman and identifying Himself with the totality of organs.”⁴ Virat

(Cosmic Body) is the macrocosm, the unity of all physical bodies and material particles.⁵

Ramanuja (1017-1137) the most outstanding Qualified Nondualist was of the conviction that, “The individual soul is a part (amsha) of the highest Self; as the light issuing from a luminous thing such as fire or the sun is part of that body [sharira] ... the highest Self is not of the same nature as the individual soul. For as the luminous body is of a nature different from that of its light, thus the highest Self differs from the individual soul which is a part of it.... That the world and Brahman stand to each other in the relation of part and whole, the former being like the light and the latter like the luminous body, or the former being like the power and the latter like that in which the power inheres the former being like the body and the latter like the soul.”⁶ Human bodies are each a part of Brahman’s (God’s) universal body. “The fact that the scriptures proclaim ‘that the entire world forms the body of Brahman,’ shows that they teach the plurality of the world, though differing from him in character, is completely dependent on Him and stands to Him in the relation of mode (prakara).... Intelligent and non-intelligent beings are thus mere modes of the highest Brahman, and have reality thereby only.”⁷ “The highest Self, which in Itself is of the nature of unlimited knowledge and bliss, has for Its body all sentient and non-sentient beings ... While the highest Self thus undergoes a change—in the form of a world comprising the whole aggregate of sentient and non-sentient beings—all imperfection and suffering are limited to the sentient beings constituting part of its body, and all change is restricted to non-sentient things which constitute another part. The highest Self ... being their inner Ruler and Self, it is in no way touched by their imperfections and changes.”⁸ “As the meditating individual soul is the Self of its own body, so the highest Brahman is the Self of the individual soul ... 'He who dwelling within the Self is different from the Self, whom the Self does not know, of whom the Self is the body, who rules the Self from within, He is thy Self, the inner ruler, the immortal one' (Bri. Up. III, 7:3) ... all sentient and insentient beings spring from Brahman, are merged in Him, breathe through Him, are ruled by Him, constitute His body.”⁹ “Know them all to have originated from Me alone, and they abide in Me alone, as they constitute My body. 'But I am not in them.' That is, I do not depend for My existence on them at any time.”¹⁰ See Ch. VII, Section 1. The Universe as a Modification of Brahman-God for more on the subject.

S. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) mentioned that for Ramanuja the human soul and matter are related to Brahman (God) “as attributes to a substance, as parts to a whole, or a body to the soul.”¹¹ Other relations include light rays to the sun, a web to the spider from which it arose, as mental and physical objects projected or externalized by the inner Self, or as modes. The problem is that these relationships differ from one another representing different metaphysical models.

Vivekananda (1863-1902) discerned, “Ishvara [Personal God] is the sum total of individuals; yet He Himself also is an individual in the same way as the human body is a unit, of which each cell is an individual. Samashti or the Collective is God. Vyashti or the component is the soul or Jiva. The existence of Ishvara, therefore, depends on that of Jiva, as the body on the cell, and vice versa. Jiva, and Ishvara are co-existent beings. As long as the one exists, the other also must.”¹² “In the long run, mind is begetting all force, and that is what is meant by the Universal Mind, the sum total of all minds. Everyone is creating, and [in] the sum total of all these creations you have the universe--unity in diversity. It is one and it is many at the same time. The Personal God is only the sum total of all, and yet It is an individual by itself, just as you are the individual body of which each cell is an individual part itself. Everything that has motion is included in Prana or force. [It is] this Prana which is moving the stars, sun, moon; Prana is gravitation.... All forces of nature, therefore, must be created by the Universal Mind. And we, as little bits of mind [are] taking out that Prana from nature, working it out again in our own nature, moving our bodies and manufacturing our thought.” “This [telepathy] shows that there is a continuity of mind, as the Yogis call it. The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little minds, are fragments of that Universal Mind, little waves in the ocean; and on account of this continuity, we can convey our thoughts directly to one another.”¹³

This is a type of Objective Idealism that reduces existence to mind and thought. But our mind is only a small fragment of the Universal Mind, which to some extent exists apart from us in a supersensuous realm. One must remember that mind has substantial existence being composed of subtle matter and energy at a vibrational level beyond our awareness. By contrasts, Subjective Idealists believe objects exist only when perceived and thus “To be is to be perceived.”

A Jewish thinker Philo Judaeus of Alexandria in Egypt (c. 20 B.C.-50 A.D.) emphasized, “Every man, in respect of his mind, is intimately related

to the Divine Logos, being an imprint or fragment or effulgence of that blessed nature, but in the constitution of the body he is related to the entire world, for he is a blend of the same things, earth, water, air, and fire.” How can the tiny human mind “contain such an immense magnitude of sky and universe, had it not been an inseparable portion of that Divine and blessed soul? For nothing is severed or detached from the Divine, but only extended.” “Reasoning is a short word, but a most perfect and most Divine activity, a fragment of the soul [mind, intellect] of the universe, or a more perfect way of putting it for those following the philosophy of Moses, a close imprint of the Divine image.” “There is an immense difference between the man now fashioned and the one created earlier after the image of God. For the molded man is sense-perceptible, partaking already of specific quality framed of body and soul, man or woman, by nature mortal; whereas he that was after the image was an idea or genus or seal, intelligible, incorporeal, neither male nor female, imperishable by nature.”¹⁴

Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) who according to tradition traveled to India taught, “The soul of every man is ‘lonely’ because it is separated during its union with the human body, from the Universal Soul, into which it is again received when it departs from its earthly companion.”¹⁵

Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-1327) reasoned out, “As long as I am this or that, or have this or that, I am not all things and I have not all things. Become pure till you neither are nor have either this or that; then you are omnipresent and, being neither this nor that, are all things.”¹⁶

According to the teachings of Benedict Spinoza (1632-77) the Dutch Jewish philosopher (as expressed by Harry Wolfson), “After the model of the emanationist philosophy there is a Universal Soul which he calls the infinite Intellect of God; and of that soul the human soul is, as he has said, a part and that part of the infinite Intellect of God is certainly not annihilated with the death of man: it is reabsorbed in the source whence it came. For with his denial of creation out of nothing, Spinoza also denied the destruction of anything into nothing.... For in his own philosophy there is a Universal Body as there is a Universal Soul, and both are inseparably united, and of that Universal Body the individual human body is a part, and, upon the death of man, just as his soul is reabsorbed in the Universal Soul, so is his body reabsorbed in the Universal Body.” “There is a Universal Soul, of which the soul of every individual human being is an undifferentiated portion and that whatever individuality it displays during its existence in the body is owing to its contact with that body.... This distinctness and

individuality, by the eternal order of nature, is retained by the soul even after it departs from the body. It is as an individualized soul that it returns to its native source, the Universal Soul. It is not reabsorbed by it; it only finds shelter in it.”¹⁷ In Spinoza’s words, “The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the human body, but something of it remains which is eternal.” There is only one substance, which has infinite attributes. “Particular things are nothing else than modifications of attributes of God, or modes by which attributes of God are expressed in a certain and determined manner.”¹⁸ “The human mind is a part of the infinite Intellect of God, and thus when we say that the human mind perceives this or that, we say nothing else than that God, not in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as he is explained through the nature of the human mind, or in so far as he constitutes the essence of the human mind, has this or that idea.”¹⁹ The Universal Body and Universal Soul correspond to the Indian Mahat.

The American Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) in his essay on “The Over-Soul” writes, “That unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart, of which all sincere conversation is the worship ... We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the Soul of the Whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal One. And this deep power in which we exist, and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the Whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the Soul.... All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie,—an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. A man is the facade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action,

would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love.... [The Soul] passes onto and becomes that man who it enlightens it takes him to itself.”²⁰

The ideas of the British philosopher A(lfred) E(dward) Taylor (1869-1945) can be used to explain the relationship between God as the Universal Cosmic Mind and the individual soul or self. He wrote, “Reality [the Universal Cosmic Mind], we have seen, is to be thought of as a systematic whole forming a single individual experience, which is composed of elements or constituents [including individual selves], which are in their turn individual experiences. In each of these constituents the nature of the whole system manifests itself in a special way. Each of them [including individual selves] contributes its own peculiar content to the whole system, and as the suppression or change of any one of them would alter the character of the whole, so it is the nature of the whole which determines the character of each of its constituents. In this way the whole and its constituent members are in complete interpenetration and form a perfect systematic unity. In the happy phrase of Leibniz, we may say that each of the partial experiences reflect the whole system from its own peculiar ‘point of view’.... In a systematic unity, we must remember, the whole [Universal Cosmic Mind] can exist only in so far as it expresses its nature in the system of its parts [including individual selves], and again the parts can have no being except as the whole expresses itself through them.... If our conviction that Reality is a single systematic unity pervading and manifesting itself in lesser systematic unities is correct, we shall expect to find that some of the lesser systematic unities with which we have to deal in practical life and in the various sciences exhibit more of the full character of the whole to which they belong than others.... Though the whole, in a genuine system, must be present as a whole in every part, it need not be equally present in all ... it does not follow that all manifest the structure of that whole with equal adequacy and fullness.... the nature of the whole system of Reality is exhibited with infinitely greater adequacy and clearness in the working of the conscious mind than in the [material] changes of configuration of the system of mass-particles or even the vital [living] processes of the physical organism.”²¹

Timothy Sprigge (1932-2007) of the University of Edinburgh writes of the two approaches of monistic metaphysicians. “The first speak primarily of the way in which all individual finite centres of experience are aspects of a total all-embracing cosmic unity of experience whose filling

they constitute, though It experiences them in a unity not graspable by these parts themselves. We might call this many-in-one or all-in-one monism” employed by F. H. Bradley and Sprigge. “The second speak primarily of there being a single subject of experience, or perhaps a pure essence of consciousness, which looks out at, or feels the world from, the situation of every single finite subject in each of which it is thought of as being equally and wholly present. We might call this one-in-many or one-in-all monism” utilized by B. Spinoza, A. Schopenhauer, and E. Schrodinger. The first approach is Qualified Nondualism where finite entities are a reflection or part, etc. of the Reality and the second is Nondualism where as the Atman they are the Reality Itself.²²

For more on this subject see, Ch. VII, Section 1. The Universe as a Modification of Brahman-God.

B. The Soul (Self) as a Projection and Emanation of Divinity

Vivekananda clarified, “No one will be lost. We are all projected from one common centre, which is God. The highest as well as the lowest life God ever projected, will come back to the Father of all lives. ‘From whom all beings are projected, in whom all live, and unto whom they all return; that is God.’”²³ “If the universe is the effect and God the cause, it must be God Himself--it cannot be anything but that. They [Qualified Nondualists] start with the assertion that God is both the efficient and the material cause of the universe; that He Himself is the creator, and He Himself is the material out of which the whole of nature is projected. The word ‘creation’ in your language has no equivalent in Sanskrit, because there is no sect in India which believes in creation, as it is regarded in the West, as something coming out of nothing. It seems that at one time there were a few that had some such idea, but they were very quickly silenced. At the present time I do not know of any sect that believes this. What we mean by creation is projection of that which already existed. Now, the whole universe, according to this sect, is God Himself. He is the material of the universe. We read in the *Vedas*, “As the Urnanabhi (spider) spins the thread out of its own body ... even so the whole universe has come out of the Being.” “All this universe was in Brahman, and it was, as it were, projected out of Him, and has been moving on to go back to the source from which it was projected, like the electricity which comes out of the dynamo, completes the circuit, and returns to it. The same is the case with the soul. Projected from Brahman, it passed through all sorts of

vegetable and animal forms, and at last it is in man, and man is the nearest approach to Brahman. To go back to Brahman from which we have been projected is the great struggle of life.” “The projection and the Pralaya of the universe have been compared by theistic writers in India to the outbreathing and inbreathing of God; God, as it were, breathes out the universe, and it comes into Him again. When it quiets down, what becomes of the universe? It exists, only in finer forms, in the form of cause, as it is called in the Sankhya philosophy. It does not get rid of causation, time, and space; they are there, only it comes to very fine and minute forms.”²⁴

In the West, Plotinus (c. 205-70) taught that the creation of the Divine world occurs by a series of radiations or emanations, originating in the One (Hen, Nirguna Brahman). It differs from the conception of *creatio ex nihilo* (out of nothing). The first emanation *ex deo* (out of God) is Nous (Divine Intellect, Saguna Brahman, Ishvara). From Nous proceeds the World Soul (Psyche, Mahat, Universal Mind) that is subdivided into an upper and lower aspect that is Nature (Physis). Individual human souls proceed from the World Soul, and finally there is formless prime matter (hyle), utter privation, “an image of an image,” the lowest level of being. As the flow descends farther from the One, its divinity steadily decreases. The One is not affected or diminished by these emanations. Plotinus uses the analogy of the sun emanating light without lessening itself, or the reflection in a mirror not affecting the object being reflected. He also uses the metaphors of the radiation of heat from fire, cold from snow, and fragrance from a flower. This is not a temporal process but an ongoing atemporal ontological dependence. Being a great mystic, Plotinus emphasized attaining ecstatic union with the One, which according to his disciple Porphyry he attained four times during the years he knew him.²⁵

Plotinus places the locus of the soul's divinity in the Nous, which corresponds to Saguna Brahman and Ishvara. According to his “Doctrine of the Undescended Soul,” the highest part of the soul that is our true Self never descends to the earth but permanently abides in the Divine realm (Nous). He stated, “Our soul does not altogether come down, but there is always something of it in the Intelligible [Divine realm]; but if the part which is in the world of sense-perception gets control ... it prevents us from perceiving the things which the upper part of the soul contemplates.... For every soul has something of it which is below, in the direction of the body, and what is above, in the direction of the Intellect

[Nous].” The soul operates on three levels, “One part of our soul is always directed to the Intelligible realities [Divine realm], one to the things of this world, and one is in the middle between these.” “For the soul is many things, and all things, both the things above and the things below down to the limits of all life, and we are each one of us an Intelligible universe, making contact with this lower world by the powers of soul below, but with the Intelligible world by its powers above.”²⁶ “This light [of the Nous] shining in the soul illuminates it; that is, it makes it intelligent.... it turns the soul back upon itself and does not allow it to disperse, but makes it satisfied with the glory in itself; and it is certainly not a life of sense-perception either; for sense-perception looks outside and perceives the external world.” “There is the One [Nirguna Brahman] beyond being ... next in order there is [Divine] Being and Intellect, and the nature of the [World] Soul in the third place ... we ought to think they are present also in ourselves.... outside the realm of sense-perceptions.... Our soul then also is a Divine thing and of a nature different [from the things of sense], like the universal nature of soul; and the human soul is perfect when it has intellect; and intellect is of two kinds, the one which reasons and the one which makes it possible to reason. Now this reasoning part of the soul, which needs no bodily instrument for its reasoning, but preserves its activity in purity in order that it may be able to engage in pure reasoning, one could without mistake place, as separate and unmixed with body, in the primary Intelligible [Divine] realm.” “From the heavenly soul comes out an image of it and so to speak flows down from above and makes the living things on earth. Since, then, this kind of soul tries to imitate the soul up there but is unable to because it is using worse bodies for its making and it is working in a worse place.”²⁷ “For every man is double, one of him is the sort of compound being and one of him is himself; and the whole universe is, one part the composite of body and a sort of soul bound to body, and one the soul of the All which is not in body but makes a trace of itself shine on that which is in body.” “There must be true knowledge in the souls which are in us, and these are not images or likenesses of their Forms as things are in the sense-world, but those very Forms themselves.”²⁸

A commentator presents Plotinus’ ideas thusly, “Our true Self, the ‘man within,’ is our higher soul which exists eternally close to and continually illumined by Intellect [Nous, Saguna Brahman, Ishvara]. This does not sin or suffer and remains essentially free and unhampered in its rational and intellectual activities by the turbulence of the body and its world,

into which the higher soul does not 'come down.' What enters the lower world is only an irradiation from the higher soul, an image or expression of it on the lower level, which joins with the bodily organism to form the 'joint entity,' the 'composite'; it is this 'other man' or lower self which sins and suffer and is ignorant and emotionally disturbed, and in general is the subject of what most people regard as ordinary human experience."²⁹ In the Intelligible (Divine) World (Nous), the soul eventually attains ultimate union with the One [Nirguna Brahman].

For Plotinus our perfect divinity (the Undescended Soul) differs from the Atman in that it exists in the Nous (Saguna Brahman). Following Plotinus we can say that since in this world the Higher Reality is manifesting through a matter and body and not a spiritual substance, It is experienced in a deficient way.

Ibn al-'Arabi (1165-1240) who was born in Muslim Spain taught that the universe including humans are a projection of the Names of God. In a spiritual experience God is loving God. He wrote "God epiphanizes [manifests] Himself to the soul according to the essence of that soul, which is at once physical and spiritual. Then the soul becomes aware that it sees God, but through Him, not through itself; it loves only Him, not through itself, but in such a way that it is He who loves Himself; it is not the soul which loves Him; it contemplates God in every being, but thanks to a gaze which is the Divine gaze itself. It becomes aware that He loves no other than Himself; He is the Lover and the Beloved, He who seeks and He who is sought." "God (al-Haqq) is your mirror, that is the mirror in which you contemplate your self (nafs, anima), and you, you are His mirror, that is the mirror in which He contemplates His Divine Names.... Here we have a reciprocal relationship as between two mirrors facing one another and reflecting the same image back and forth."³⁰

The Russian mystical philosopher Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900) indicated, "An individual person is only a ray, living and actual, but an inseparable ray of one ideal light—of the one Universal Substance. This ideal person or personified idea is merely an individualization of the All-Unity which is indivisibly present in each one of its individual expression."³¹ "We have no need or right to limit man to the data of visible reality; we speak of the Ideal Man, [who is] nevertheless altogether essential and real—much more, incommensurably more essential and real than the visible manifestation of human beings.... If a man as a phenomenon is a transitory fact, then as essence he is necessarily eternal and all-embracing; what is, then, the Ideal Man? In order to be actual he must be

one and [at the same time] many; consequently, he is not only the universal general essence of all human specimens, abstracted from them; he is a universal, and at the same time, an individual being, containing in himself all these specimens actually. Every one of us, every human being, is essentially and actually rooted, and takes part, in the Universal or Absolute Man.... every man is rooted in his deepest essence in the eternal Divine world, that he is not only a visible phenomenon, i.e., a series of events and a group of facts, but an eternal and particular being, a necessary and irreplaceable link in the Absolute Whole.... Christian theologians and philosophers always distinguished between the finite phenomenon of the world in space and time, and the eternal existence of the idea of the world in the thought of God, i.e., in Logos.”³²

Paul Tillich stated, Sigmund Freud “calls God the projection of the father image. But every projection is not only a projection of something, it is also a projection upon something. What is this 'something' upon which the image of the father is 'projected' so that it becomes Divine? The answer can only be: It is projected upon the 'screen' of the Unconditional! And this screen is not projected. It makes projection possible.... The first and basic step is the assertion that man, as man, experiences something Unconditional.” “Projection is always projection on something—a wall, a screen, another being, another realm. Obviously, it is absurd to class that on which the projection is realized [the screen] with the projection itself. A screen is not projected; it receives the projection. The realm against which the Divine images are projected is not itself a projection. It is the experienced ultimacy of being and meaning. It is the realm of ultimate concern.”³³

Following David Bohm’s (1917-92) logic all people have an Implicate Self and an empirical Explicate Self. He states, “‘All implicates all,’ even to the extent that ‘we ourselves’ are implicated together with ‘all that we see and think about.’ So we are present everywhere and at all times, though only implicately (that is implicitly).” “Everything implicates everything in an order of undivided wholeness.”³⁴ “Each of these elements is a projection, in a sub-totality of yet higher 'dimension.' So it will be ultimately misleading and indeed wrong to suppose, for example, that each human being is an independent actuality who interacts with other human beings and with nature. Rather, all these are projections of a single totality.... From the side of mind we can also see that it is necessary to go on to a more inclusive ground. Thus, as we have seen, the easily accessible explicit content of consciousness is included within a much greater implicit

(or implicate) background.”³⁵ “Therefore if we are separate it is because we are sticking largely to the manifest [Explicate] world as the basic reality where the whole point is to have separate units, relatively separate anyway, but interacting. In nonmanifest [Implicate] reality it's all interpenetrating, interconnected, one. So we say deep down the consciousness of mankind is one.”³⁶ See Ch. VIII, Section 5. Vivekananda’s Mahat and David Bohm’s Super-Implicate and Implicate Order.

C. The Soul (Self) as a Reflection of Divinity

Indian: “There is one moon (God) in the firmament, but is reflected in numerous jars of water” (Amritabindu Up.).

New Testament: “For now we see in mirror dimly, but then face to face” (I Cor. 13.12).

Madhva (1190/1238-1276/1317) expressed the theory that Brahman (God) is the archetype (bimba) and the human soul “(jiva) is a reflection [pratibimba] of the Lord.”³⁷ “In stating that Jiva is a fragment there is no contradiction, because it is a reflection, it is in that manner a fragment.”³⁸ He supplies the analogy of the rainbow due to the sun's rays falling on a drop of rainwater. A commentator on Madhva’s teachings, B. N. K. Sharma tells us, “The rainbow is an image of the Sun’s rays acting as their own medium. We have similarly to conceive of the Jiva [Soul, individual self] as the image and medium of the power of Vishesa [the differentiating potency of things], at the same time. The mirror merely throws back the light falling on it. The raindrops, however, receive the light and they let it transverse through them and emerge out of them again, and in this process exhibit the glory of the sunlight. The raindrops must be deemed to be active, unlike the mirror which is merely passive.... Every one of us is a tiny rainbow which still has the potency, the capacity to receive and manifest the Divine light and transmit it.... It is to Madhva an indissoluble and perpetual relation. It is a relation of intrinsic dependence of the Jiva and its essential characteristics of reality, consciousness, and bliss [Sat-chit-ananda]" on Brahman (God).³⁹ A deep spiritual understanding of the conviction that we are a dependent reflection of the Divine, leads to an attraction and affection toward Brahman and eventual liberation (moksha). Though Madhva is considered to be the leading figure in the Dualist School his support of the reflection theory shows some leaning toward Qualified Nondualism. He favors the

idea that we are a fragment of Brahman in the sense of being an active reflection of the Divine.

If the phenomenal world reflects the light of Brahman (God) (the sun as an analogy), there must be a reciprocal reflection back to the Atman for the person to have knowledge of the events in the human realm. Consequently, a theory of double reflection (*anyonya-pratibimba*) was developed whereby, “According to Vijnanabhiksu [fl. 1550/1600], the process of perceptual knowledge is like this. When any object comes in contact with its special sense organ, the intellect [buddhi] becomes modified into the form of the object. Then, because of the predominance of sattva in it, the intellect reflects the conscious Self [Atman, Purusha] and seems to be conscious, in the same way in which a mirror reflects the light of a lamp and becomes itself luminous and capable of manifesting other objects. But next, the intellect, which is thus modified into the form of the object, is reflected back in the Self [Atman]. That is, the object is presented to the Self through a mental modification corresponding to the form of the object.... there is a reciprocal reflection of the Self in the intellect and of the intellect in the Self.”⁴⁰ The mind is insentient until it receives its consciousness as a reflection of the Atman-Purusha. The mind as a reflection is conscious but is Atman-Purusha?

Double reflection is supported by Vivekananda when he wrote, “When the mind comes near the Purusha [Atman], it is reflected, as it were, upon the mind, and the mind, for the time being, becomes knowing and seems as if it were itself the Purusha.” “On one side of the mind the external world, the seen, is being reflected, and on the other, the seer is being reflected. Thus comes the power of all knowledge to the mind.” “Behind this never-ending chain of motion is the Purusha the changeless, the colourless, the pure. All these impressions are merely reflected upon It, as a magic lantern throws images upon a screen, without in any way tarnishing it.”⁴¹ Purusha shines on the insentient intellect producing mental images that are in turn projected back onto the screen of Purusha resulting in the phenomenal world (like a movie picture on a screen). Vivekananda also mentions the reflection of nature is on the Atman, “It is nature moving before the Atman, and the reflection of this motion is on the Atman; and the Atman ignorantly thinks it is moving, and not nature. When the Atman thinks that, it is in bondage; but when it comes to find it never moves, that it is omnipresent, then freedom comes. The Atman in bondage is called Jiva.”⁴² Does this mean that human consciousness originates with the Atman?

Vivekananda continues, “The Self [Atman] of man is beyond all these, beyond nature. It is effulgent, pure, and perfect. Whatever of intelligence we see in nature is but the reflection of this Self upon nature.” “As the one sun, reflected on various pieces of water, appears to be many, and millions of globules of water reflect so many millions of suns, and in each globule will be a perfect image of the sun, yet there is only one sun, so are all these Jivas [individual souls] but reflections in different minds. These different minds are like so many different globules, reflecting this one Being. God is being reflected in all these different Jivas.”⁴³ “The infinite is one and not many, and that one Infinite Soul (Atman, Purusha] is reflecting Itself through thousands and thousands of mirrors, appearing as so many different souls. It is the same Infinite Soul, which is the background of the universe, that we call God.”⁴⁴ “Each Soul is pure and perfect, omnipotent and omniscient, as they say in the Sankhya; but it can manifest itself externally only according to the mind it has got. The mind is, as it were, the reflecting mirror of the Soul. My mind reflects to a certain extent the powers of my Soul; so your Soul, and so everyone's. That mirror which is clearer reflects the Soul better. So the manifestation varies according to the mind one possesses; but the Souls in themselves are pure and perfect.”⁴⁵ We are each a piece of prakriti. As we evolve we reflect the purusha better and are liberated when we no longer identify with prakriti. There is no need for the multiple purushas that Sankhya advocates. Purusha is changeless and is never bound.

Swami Abhedananda (1866-1939) apprehended, “When we speak of a man or woman as the image of God, we do not mean his or her physical form, but we mean the individual ego or the soul.” “The ego or individual soul is the image of God, who is the Spirit. He is the universal spirit. He is like the self-effulgent sun, and each individual soul is like a reflection of the sun on the mirror of the intellect. As the reflection cannot exist without being related to the object of reflection, so the individual soul cannot exist without being closely related to the Spirit, whose reflection it is.”⁴⁶ “Every individual soul, whether it be more or less animal in its thoughts and actions, possesses the Divine image and is no other than the image of the Divine Principle or Being. The Divine Being is one and universal but its reflections or images are many.... the Divine image, falling upon the dull surface of the animal nature cannot reflect all the blessed qualities, cannot manifest all the Divine powers, but, on the contrary, appears animal in its tendencies and propensities.” “The individual soul, being the image of God, cannot exist even for a moment without

depending upon the Divine Principle. The individual ego owes its life, its intelligence, its intellect, mind, and all other mental and physical powers to that infinite source of all powers, all knowledge, all love, and everlasting happiness. In fact the individual soul does not possess anything. All these powers and forces that we are expressing in our daily life, whether animal, moral, or spiritual, do not belong to us, but proceed from that one inexhaustible source. Nor is the Divine Principle far from us; He is the soul of our soul, the life of our life, and the omnipotent essence of our being.”⁴⁷

A Bishop from Asia Minor, Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330-95) espoused the idea that, “The first formation of man bears witness that our nature was made after the image and likeness of God; surely because being made after the image he possessed in all things the likeness to the archetype [God].” “If then man is brought into being to be a participator in the Divine goods, he must of necessity be formed in such a way as to be equipped to share in those goods. Just as the eye by the brightness implanted in it by nature enters into communion with light attracting what is akin to it through its cognate power, so it was necessary that there be something mingled with man’s nature akin to Divine that through the correspondence it might have the urge to what is proper to it.”⁴⁸ God’s spiritual image and the Divine attributes of God are reflected on the mirror of the soul according to an individual’s capacity of reception. “Nothing will prevent one from participating in the good, if he frees himself from such movements (toward sin), and returning to himself again, comes to fully know himself what he is by nature and through his own beauty in his image as in a mirror looks at the archetype.” “The mind has been adorned with the likeness of the beauty of the archetype and like a mirror is conformed to the character of that which it expresses.” “Just as a mirror which through skill has been made suitable for use on its clear surface accurately receives in itself the character of the countenance it reflects, so the soul, after it has suitably conditioned itself for use and cast off all the mire pertaining to this world, impresses the pure form of the undefiled beauty in itself.” The Lord “teaches us that he who has cleansed his heart from all creatures and from every passionate disposition sees in his own beauty the image of the Divine nature.”⁴⁹ Humans can experience the sacred presence because of the indwelling image of God within them, which is the Divine element that enables the believer to attain the mystic vision. “If the image resembles in all respects the excellence of the

Prototype, it would no longer be the image, but would itself be the Prototype, there being no means of distinguishing them.”⁵⁰ In a state of self-deification which is the final goal of human life, the individual objectifies the image, by becoming an unblemished reflected image of God.⁵¹

John Dourley explains, “Bonaventure [1217/21-74] will thus refer to all of creation reflecting God in various degrees of intensity. All of creation reflects God in so much as it is a shadow (umbra) and a vestige [trace] of God. Every being is a shadow of God in as much as it points to God ‘distantly and confusedly’ as its cause ‘according to an undetermined reason.’ By this Bonaventure seems to mean that creatures can be seen as a referent to God as simply dependent on him as their cause and yet say very little about God. Every creature is also a vestige of God in as much as it points to God ‘distantly but distinctly’ as its threefold cause ‘efficient, formal, and final as they [creatures] are one, true and good’.... the image quality of man and the deiform [Divine] or similitude quality of man as graced really refer to the root nature of man as an image of God. The dynamic of grace, then, is a process of man's becoming a more perfect realization of that which he always was as an image of God.”⁵² “When the soul is turned toward God, it is conformed to itself and the image is attained according to conformity; therefore, the image of God consists in these powers as they have God as object ... but when the soul is turned to inferior creatures it is conformed to those things in whom there is no image of God but a vestige. Therefore, the powers of the soul, in as much as they have inferiors for objects, recede from the nature of image because they recede from an expressed conformity.”⁵³

In the Recapitulation chapter of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (1910), Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) the founder of the Christian Science Church summarized her ideas, “Man is, and forever has been, God’s reflection. God is infinite, therefore ever present, and there is no other power or presence. Hence the spirituality of the universe is the only fact of creation.... The Scriptures inform us that man is made in the image and likeness of God. Matter is not that likeness. The likeness of Spirit cannot be so unlike Spirit. Man is spiritual and perfect; and because he is spiritual and perfect, he must be so understood in Christian Science. Man is idea, the image of Love, he is not physique. He is the compound idea of God, including all right ideas; the generic term for all that reflects God’s image and likeness; the conscious idea of being as found in Science, in which man is the reflection of God, or Mind, and therefore is eternal;

that which has no separate mind from God; that which has not a single quality underived from Deity; that which possesses no life, intelligence, nor creative power of his own, that reflects spirituality all that belongs to his Maker.”⁵⁴

Traditional mayavadins hold Nirguna Brahman=Atman to be real and all else to be an appearance. Conversely, Mrs. Eddy considers Personal God (Saguna Brahman) and the phenomenal world to be real, but all of the seeming imperfections of the world are unreal misperceived by mortal mind. She writes, “Truth is immortal; error is mortal. Truth is limitless; error is limited. Truth is intelligence; error is non-intelligent. Moreover, Truth is real and error is unreal.... Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal.... If God, or good, is real, then evil, the unlikeness of God, is unreal. And evil can only seem to be real by giving reality to the unreal.... The only reality of sin, sickness, or death is the awful fact that unrealities seem real to human, erring belief, until God strips off the disguise. They are not true because they are not of God. We learn in Christian Science that all in harmony of mortal mind or body is illusion, possessing neither reality nor identity though seeming to be real and identical.”⁵⁵ Originally, Mrs. Eddy made the unnecessary and arbitrary inference that because people are spiritual beings they should not go to doctors. Modern advances in and the availability of medicine have worked against this idea. In 1901, Mrs. Eddy advised her followers to be vaccinated. The Christian Science church now accepts the use of medical science. (For more on M. B. Eddy see Ch. VI, Section 3. The Divinity of the World.

The reflection theory implies “Degrees of Expression of Ultimate Reality,” where Ultimate Reality is Brahman-God. The greater the manifestation, the more Reality is explicitly present in an object; and the closer the reflected ectype is to the archetype, the more real it is. The greater the knowledge, potency, joy, and goodness the more it resembles Ultimate Reality.⁵⁶

2. Theistic Dualism

A. The Divine Presence in the Soul (Self)

Indian: “Verily, not for the sake of the husband, my dear, is the husband loved, but he is loved for the sake of the Self [Atman]. Verily, not for the sake of the wife, my dear, is the wife loved, but she is loved

for the sake of the Self” (Br. Up. 2:4.5; 4:5.6). The “resplendent Lord is hidden in all beings. All-pervading, the inmost Self of all creatures, the impeller to actions, abiding in all things, He is the Witness, the Animator” (Svet. Up. 6:11).

Old Testament: “Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). “When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God” (Gen. 5:1). “God made man in his own image” (Gen. 9:6; cf. Wisd. 2:23). “Thou hast made him [man] little less than God” (Ps. 8:5). “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you” (Ps. 82:6). New Testament: “For indeed, the Kingdom of God is within you” (Lk. 17:21, KJ). “Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, I said, you are Gods?’” (Jn. 10:34). “Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made” (Rom. 1:20). “They [the Gentiles] show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness” (Rom. 2:15). He [man] is the image and glory of God” (1 Cor. 11:7). “Men who are made in the likeness of God” (Jam. 3:9).

According to Madhva and the Dvaita Vedantists, the Jiva (individual soul) is eternal and by nature possesses the unacquired essential attributes of existence, consciousness, and bliss. Maya hides the spiritual nature of Jivas and gets them involved in the reincarnation cycle (Samsara). When the Lord extends His grace upon the Jivas then they realize their true Divine nature, and their dependence on God in the aspects of being, knowing, and acting.⁵⁷

In his commentary on the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishads* (2:4.5; 4:5.6), Swami Nikhilananda (1895-1973) of the Ramakrishna Order in New York City explained the above passage as “Not for the sake of the husband, my dear, is the husband loved, but he is loved for the sake of the Self,” to mean that when people are attracted to their wife or husband or any worldly thing, they are really but unknowingly attracted to God who is the indwelling essence of all things. “The real attraction of things for a man is the attraction of the Spirit, or Brahman, for the Spirit which is the indwelling essence of all.”⁵⁸

Following Bonaventure’s (1217/21-74) logic, being an image of God, humans have a natural innate apprehension of the presence of God that they can attain. John Dourley remarked, “Bonaventure's position on man's

knowledge of God, rests ultimately on his consistent position that God is so immanent to the mind that the mind is, naturally aware of his presence and that this awareness provides the basis for man's experience of and assertions about God.”⁵⁹ Bonaventure himself disclosed, “The soul itself is an image of God and a similitude so present to itself and having him so present to it that it actually grasps Him and potentially ‘is capable of possessing Him and of becoming a partaker in Him.’” “Hence, as the image of God comes forth directly, so also does the likeness of God, which is the same image but in its God-conformed perfection, and is called therefore, the image of the second creation.” “It [God's existence] is certain to the one understanding because knowledge of this truth is innate to the rational mind in as much as it has the nature of image, by reason of which there is implanted in it a natural appetite and knowledge and memory of that in whose image it is made to whom naturally it tends that it may be made happy in it.”⁶⁰

St. Thomas Aquinas designated that the Holy Spirit which is God, dwells and speaks within the soul and sanctifies the believer. It spoke through the prophets and apostles, revealed wisdom, and is omnipresent.⁶¹ “Since the charity [love] by which we love God is in us by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit Himself must also be in us, so long as the charity is in us. And so the Apostle says: ‘Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?’ (I Cor. 3:16). Therefore, since we are made lovers of God by the Holy Spirit, and every beloved is in the lover as such, by the Holy Spirit necessarily the Father and the Son dwell in us also.... Therefore, by the Holy Spirit not only is God in us, but we are in God. Hence, we read in 1 John (4:16, 13): ‘He that abideth in charity [love] abideth in God, and God in him;’ and: ‘In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us: because He hath given us His Spirit.’”⁶²

In addition, Thomas Aquinas wrote, “God ought to be loved chiefly and before all charity [love], for He is loved as the cause of happiness, while our neighbor is loved as receiving together with us a share of happiness from Him.”⁶³ The *Upanishads* passage mentioned by Swami Nikhilananda declares the husband or wife is loved for the sake of the Atman within them. From the theistic standpoint as presented by Aquinas, God is the first cause and whatever is loved in the husband or wife (the secondary cause) originates from God.

Meister Eckhart (c. 1260-1327) adds, “I already possess all that is granted to me in eternity. For God in the fullness of His Godhead dwells

eternally in his image--the soul.”⁶⁴ “One should not apprehend God nor consider Him outside oneself, but as our own and as what is in ourselves. Nor should one serve or work for any 'Why' or 'Wherefore,' neither for God nor for His glory, nor for anything that is outside oneself, but only for the sake of that which is our own being and our own life in us. Some simple folk imagine that they will see God as if He stood there and they stood here. That is not so. God and I are one. Through knowledge I receive God into myself, and through love I enter into Him.... The soul receives its being from God without medium; therefore God is nearer to the soul than it is to itself. Therefore God is in the ground of the soul with all His Divinity.... This implies that we are the only-begotten Son whom the Father begat eternally. When the Father begat all creatures, He begat me also, and I flowed out with all creatures and yet remained in the Father.”⁶⁵

As stated by St. John of the Cross (1542-91) the Spanish monastic, if a window “be wholly pure and clean, the ray of sunlight will transform it and illumine it in such wise that it will itself seem to be a ray and will give the same light as the ray.... And the soul is like this window, whereupon is ever beating ... this Divine light of the Being of God.... In thus allowing God to work in it, the soul ... is at once illumined and transformed in God, and God communicates to it His supernatural Being in such wise that it appears to be God Himself and has all that God Himself has.... and the soul seems to be God rather than a soul, and is indeed God by participation; although it is true that its natural being, though thus transformed, is as distinct from the Being of God as it was before, even as the window has likewise a nature distinct from that of the ray.” “The soul is like the crystal that is clear and pure; the more degrees of light it receives, the greater concentration of light there is in it, and this enlightenment continues to such a degree that at last it attains a point at which the light is centered in it with such copiousness that it comes to appear to be wholly light, and cannot be distinguished from the light, for it is enlightened to the greatest possible extent and thus appears to be light itself.” It was assumed in Christian theology that in the “union without distinction” the mystic does not become identical with God.⁶⁶

According to Peter Sterry (1613-72) a Puritan preacher under Oliver Cromwell in England, “There is a spiritual man which lies hid under the natural man as a seed under the ground.... If thou go into thyself beyond the natural man, thou shalt meet the Spirit of God.” And one who “would know the soul to its depths would know God.” There is “something eternal” in the soul, “It lasts on through all forms, wearing them out,

casting them off for new forms, through which it manifests Itself, until it finally brings us back into Itself, and becomes our only clothing.”⁶⁷

British Anglican theologian and biochemist at Oxford and Cambridge Universities Arthur Peacocke (1924-2006) envisioned, “The more personal and self-conscious is the entity in which God is immanent, the more capable is it of expressing God's supra-personal characteristics and the more God can be immanent personally in that entity.... This raises the possibility (and so hope) that the immanence of God in the world might display, in humanity at least, a hint of some kind of reflection of, the transcendence/immanence of God. The transcendence-in-immanence of human experience raises the hope and conjecture that in humanity immanence might be able to display a transcendent dimension to a degree which would unveil, without distortion, the transcendent-Creator-who-is-immanent in a uniquely new emergent manner - that is, that in humanity (in a human being, or in human beings), the presence of God the Creator might be unveiled with a clarity, in a glory, not hitherto perceived. Might it not be possible for a human being so to reflect God, to be so wholly open to God, that God's presence was clearly unveiled to the rest of humanity in a new, emergent and unexpected manner? If that were to be so, would it not then be accurate to say that, in such a person, the immanence of God had displayed a transcendent dimension to such a degree that the presence of God in and to the actual psychosomatic unity of that person required and requires new non-reducible concepts and language to express its character and uniqueness?”⁶⁸

Brahman-God exists in all people separated by the veil of maya. This constitutes their divinity. The fact that divinity exists in the soul in seed form, motivates humans to attempt to manifest and express to a limited extent the Divine attributes on the secular level. They include existence (will to live), omnipotence (will to power), omniscience, omnibenevolence, perfection, and oneness. It is like a large redwood tree existing potentially in a small seed.

There are two standpoints from which we can consider ourself: first, empirically as belonging to the world of sense under the laws of nature and karma; and second, spiritually as belonging to the Divine world under the care and grace of Brahman-God. The saints adopt the latter way.

B. Divinity is Involved in the Soul (Self)

Swami Vivekananda emphasized another important idea, “The true secret of evolution is the manifestation of the perfection which is already in every being; that this perfection has been barred and the infinite tide behind is struggling to express itself.”⁶⁹ “Every evolution is preceded by an involution. The whole of the tree is present in the seed, which is its cause. In that one protoplasm the whole of the human being is present. Similarly, in seed form the whole of this universe is present in the cosmic fine universe. Everything is present in its cause, in its fine form in the unmanifested state. This evolution, or gradual unfolding of grosser and grosser forms, is true, but each case has been preceded by an involution.”⁷⁰ “The whole series of evolution beginning with the lowest manifestation of life and reaching up to the highest, the most perfect man, must have been the involution of something else. The next question is: The involution of what? What was involved? God.... take this whole evolutionary series, from the protoplasm at the one end to the perfect man at the other, and this whole series is one life. In the end we will find the perfect man, so in the beginning it must have been the same. Therefore, the protoplasm was the involution of the highest intelligence. You may not see it but that involved intelligence is what is uncoiling itself until it becomes manifested in the most perfect man.”⁷¹

In this regard, Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) tells us, “If it be asked, how then did all these various gradations and types of being come into existence, it can be answered that, fundamentally, they were manifested in Matter by Conscious-Force in it, by the power of the Real-Idea building its own significant forms and types for the indwelling Spirit’s cosmic existence.... For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living forms, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life, because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness.”⁷² “All existence is a manifestation of God because He is the only existence ... every conscious being is a part or in some way a descent of the Infinite into the apparent finiteness of name and form. But it is a veiled manifestation and there is a gradation between the supreme being of the Divine and the consciousness shrouded partly or wholly by ignorance of the self in the finite.”⁷³ “Spirit is a final evolutionary emergence because it is the original involutory [spirit becoming matter] element and factor. Evolution is an inverse action of the involution: what is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution. What was original and primal in the involution is in the evolution

the last and supreme emergence.”⁷⁴

Ken Wilber an American transpersonal psychologist and author, partly under the influence of Sri Aurobindo and Indian thought arrived at the following conclusions, “All the deep structures given to a collective humanity—pertaining to every level of consciousness from the body to mind to soul to spirit, gross, subtle, and causal—are enfolded or enwrapped in the ground unconscious. All of these structures are unconscious, but they are not repressed because they have not yet entered consciousness. Development—or evolution—consists of a series of hierarchical transformations or unfolding of the deep structures out of the ground—unconscious, starting with the lowest (pleroma and body), and ending with the highest (God and [Buddhist] Void)... Everyone ‘inherits’ the same basic deep structures; but everyone learns individual surface structures, which can be quite similar or quite dissimilar from those of other individuals.... [Involution] is the movement whereby Brahman throws itself outward to create the manifest worlds, a process of kenosis or self-emptying which, at the same time, is a process of pure act and pure creativity. As evolution is a movement from the lower to the higher, involution is a movement from the higher to the lower—a movement which ‘enfolds’ and ‘involves’ the higher levels of being with the lower. It is a movement ‘down’ the great Chain of Being.... according to the perennial philosophy, in order for evolution—which is the unfolding of higher structures—to occur at all, those higher structures must, in some sense, be present from the start: they must be enfolded, as potential, in the lower modes. If not, then evolution is nothing but creation ex nihilo, out of nothing.... And the story of involution is simply the story of how the higher modes came to be lost in the lower—how they came to be enwrapped and enfolded in the lower states. Involution, or the enfolding of the higher in the lower, is the pre-condition of evolution, or the unfolding of the higher states from the lower. At the extreme point of involution—which is simply the pleroma or the material world—all of the higher and highest states of being lie enfolded as undifferentiated potential. The highest and the lowest, the infinite and the finite, spirit, mind, and matter—all are enfolded as undifferentiated and unconscious potential: and that is the ground unconscious. Evolution is simply the unfolding of that enfolded potential—all the various modes of being can then eventually emerge from the ground unconscious starting with the lowest (pleroma) and ending with the highest (Atman). At each stage in

this process, the fusion of lower and higher is replaced by the integration of lower and higher; a process that itself cannot occur until the lower and higher are differentiated and disidentified. At the end of evolution, all of the structures enfolded in the ground-unconscious have emerged in consciousness, which drains the ground unconscious and leaves only Atman, or Consciousness as such.”⁷⁵

In the process of spiritual development the higher self already exists and is waiting to be uncovered and in doing so the self evolves through a process of self-formation. Where do we locate the “involved intelligence” (self) in seed form that slowly manifests in an evolutionary pattern that Vivekananda writes about? Is it in the unconscious or superconscious mind? Ken Wilber places it in the ground unconscious, though that which is enfolded or involved certainly differs from forgotten memories of prior events in this life and earlier lives that exist in (or are part of) the unconscious mind.

C. All People Exist Eternally in the Mind of God

Maximus the Confessor (580-662) a Monk near Constantinople taught that God contains within Himself eternal Ideas (Logo) of all that exists or will exist in the future. He has implanted in every created thing a thought or word, which is His intention for that thing. The Logo is the inner essence that which makes it what it is, and at the same time draws it toward the Divine. Due to these indwelling Ideas, each thing is more than an object but a personal word addressed to us by the Creator. An objects nature is determined by the Logo, what God wills it to be. Each Idea is a limited expression of God’s perfection and intentions for that being. Moving toward the Divine through love and knowledge is returning to our own Idea in God. Even when we live in the world our Idea remains in the mind of God. We are part of God in the sense that our Idea, our essence is eternally pre-existent in Him. Through the process of deification (theosis) there is an inner transformation and we return to the eternal Ideas, essences, natures, and causes from which we are now separated. The end of all beings is union with the Divine, to rejoin the immutability of God.⁷⁶

The Irish Christian Neo-Platonist and “light of the Dark Ages” in Western Europe Johannes Scotus Erigena (c. 810-77) designated, “For I understand the substance of the whole man to be nothing else but the concept of him in the Mind of his Artificer, Who knew all things in Himself before they were made; and that very knowledge is the true and only

substance of the things known, since it is in that knowledge that they are most perfectly created and eternally and immutably subsist.... The concept of man [eternally] in the Mind of God is ... simple, and cannot be called by this or that name, for it stands above all definition and all groupings of parts, for it can only be predicated of it that it is, not what it is.”⁷⁷ “For the understanding of all things in the Wisdom of God is the substance of all things, nay, it is all things. But the knowledge by which the intellectual and rational creature has intelligence of itself as it is in itself stands, as it were, for its second substance, so to speak, by which it has only the knowledge that it knows and is and wills, but has no knowledge of what it is. The first substance, constituted in the Wisdom of God, is eternal and immutable, while the second is temporal and variable; the one precedes, the other follows; the first is primordial and causal, the second proceeding and caused; the first contains all things as whole, the second comprehends through knowledge as particulars as many things as are allotted it by its superior, and are subjected to it; the second is produced by the first and will return to it again.”⁷⁸

Erigena continues, “Creatures’ can be understood in two ways, the one relating to its eternity in the Divine Knowledge, in which all things truly and substantially abide, the other to its temporal establishment which was, as it were, subsequent in itself.”⁷⁹ “Disciple: We should understand, then, that man has two substances, one that is a genus among the primordial causes, and another which is a species among the effects of those causes. Master: No, I should not say that there were two substances, but one which may be conceived under two aspects. Under one aspect the human substance is perceived as created among the intelligible causes, under the other as generated among their effects; under the former free from all mutability, under the latter subject to change; under the former simple involved in no accidents, it eludes all created intelligence; under the latter it receives a kind of composition of quantities and qualities and whatever else can be understood in relation to it, whereby it becomes apprehensible to the mind. So it is that what is one and the same thing can be thought of as twofold because there are two ways of looking at it, yet everywhere it preserves its incomprehensibility, in the effects as in the causes, and whether it is endowed with accidents or abides in its naked simplicity: under neither set of circumstances is it subject to created sense or intellect nor is it understood by itself as to what it is.” “For if it [the Divine likeness in the human mind] were known to be something, then at once it would be limited by some definition, and

thereby would cease to be a complete expression of the image of its Creator, Who is absolutely unlimited and contained within no definition, because He is infinite, superessential beyond all that may be said or comprehended.”⁸⁰ “What it is cannot be defined, because it exceeds all substantial definition. It is defined, however, by its circumstances, which occur to it, as it proceeds into its appropriate species by generation, whether intelligible or sensible.” “Not that the essence of all things, as we have often said, is one thing in the Word and another in man, but that the mind observes one and the same thing in one fashion subsisting in eternal causes and in another fashion understood in effects; for in the first it exceeds all understanding, but in the second it is understood, from the things which are considered concerning it, only to be; in neither, however, is it permitted to a created understanding to know what it is. For, if it could be known, it would not entirely express in itself the image of its creator who is known only to be from those things of which He is the principle and cause and founder, but what He is escapes all sense and understanding.”⁸¹

In England, Anselm (1033-1109) the Archbishop of Canterbury stated that while God exists through Himself, since His existence is identical with His essence; created beings receive their existence from others. “Before all things were made there was in the thought in the Supreme Nature what they were going to be or what kind they were going to be or how they were going to be.”⁸² “Before [created things] were made and once they have been made and after they have perished or have changed in some manner, they always are in this Spirit what this Spirit is, rather than what they are in themselves. For in themselves they are a mutable being, created according to immutable Reason. But in the Spirit they are the primary Being and the primary true Existence; and the more created things [in themselves] are in any way like this true Existence, the more truly and excellently they exist.... whatever was created—whether it lives or does not live, or however it exists in itself—exists as life itself and truth itself in the Supreme Spirit.... just as all things exist as life and truth in the Word of this Spirit, so they [also] exist [as life and truth] in the Spirit’s knowledge.... Human knowledge cannot comprehend how the Supreme Spirit speaks and knows created things. For no one doubts that created substances exist in themselves much differently from the way they exist in our knowledge. In themselves they exist in virtue of their own being; but in our knowledge their likenesses exist, not their own being.... Now, it is certain that the more truly the Creating Being exists than does

created being, the more truly every created substance exists in the Word (i.e., in the understanding) of the Creator than in itself.”⁸³ Subsisting as a thought of God, they are created in the physical world through the Word of God. The Word is the model of things in the Divine Mind and the means by which they objectify in the physical world.⁸⁴

The thesis was advanced by Thomas Aquinas that all creatures including humans pre-exist in a timeless eternity in God the first producing cause of all things. “Although creatures have not existed from eternity, except in God, yet because they have been in Him from eternity, God has known them eternally in their proper natures, and for that reason has loved them.”⁸⁵ “Whatever perfection exists in an effect must be found in the producing cause.... Since therefore God is the first producing cause of things, the perfection of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way.... God is being itself, of itself subsistent. Consequently, He must contain within Himself the whole perfection of being.”⁸⁶ All people exist more truly as an intelligible being in the Mind of God, than as a corporeal entity in a human body. “Natural things have a truer being absolutely in the Divine Mind than in themselves, because in that Mind they have an uncreated being, but in themselves a created being.... a house has nobler being in the architect’s mind than in matter.” God “is the First Being, and all other beings pre-exist in Him as their First Cause, it follows that they exist intelligibly in Him, after the mode of His own nature.”⁸⁷

The idea is that the soul (self) lived for a pre-eternity in a state of potentiality as an idea in the mind of God. It then became a manifested entity receiving formal existence. According to the Christians at that time, humans were conceived in an earthly body. According to the Hindus, they then began the evolutionary process as a one-celled being. If animals and plants are also an idea in the Divine Mind then they would be born with those types of bodies.

D. Immortality of the Soul (Self)

Indian: “This Self [Atman] is immutable and indestructible” (Br. Up. 4:5.14; cf. 4:5.15; 4:4.25). Now may my breath return to the all-pervading, immortal Prana [Brahma, Cosmic Life]! May this body be burnt to ashes” (Is. Up. 17; cf. Br. Up. 5:15.1). “Never will there be a time hereafter when any of us shall cease to be” (BG 2:12). “Knows the Self [Atman] to be indestructible, eternal, unborn, and immutable” (BG 2:21; cf. 2:20, 24).

Old Testament: “The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Eccl. 12:7). “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life” (Dan. 12:2).

Shankara understood that the Atman is eternal since it is both birthless and deathless. “Immortal because It is undecaying. That which is born and decays also dies; but because It is indestructible on account of its being birthless and undecaying, therefore, It is undying.”⁸⁸ Because it is changeless and partless, It is not subject to decay or a transformation of any kind. It possesses infinite power, unlimited by anything that could bring about its destruction. “He [the Self] is unchangeable. He is constant and not subject to the changes of condition known as decline. Having no parts, he does not diminish in His own substance. As devoid of qualities, he does not diminish by loss of a quality.”⁸⁹

Swami Vivekananda reasoned that the Soul (Atman) is simple and partless without extension, timeless, indestructible, and beyond the laws of nature and causation. Since it is simple, it is not a compound entity that eventually undergoes a process of disintegration and destruction returning back to its original causal state. According to the dualists, “Man is a being, who has first a gross body which dissolves very quickly, then a fine body which remains through aeons, and then a Jiva [the Self]. This Jiva, according to the Vedanta philosophy, is eternal, just as God is eternal. Nature is also eternal, but changefully eternal. The material of nature--Prana and Akasha [Material Substance]—is eternal, but it is changing into different forms eternally. But the Jiva is not manufactured either of Akasha or Prana; it is immaterial and, therefore, will remain forever. It is not the result of any combination of Prana and Akasha, and whatever is not the result of combination, will never be destroyed, because destruction is going back to causes. The gross body is a compound of Akasha and Prana and, therefore, will be decomposed. The fine body will also be decomposed, after a long time, but the Jiva is simple, and will never be destroyed. It was never born for the same reason. Nothing simple can be born.”⁹⁰ “We see, then, that the Self of man is not the body, neither is It thought. It cannot be a compound. Why not? Because everything that is a compound can be seen or imagined. That which we cannot imagine or perceive, which we cannot bind together, is not force or matter, cause or effect, and cannot be a compound. The domain of compounds is only so far as our mental universe, our thought universe extends. Beyond this it does not hold good; it is as far as law

reigns, and if there is anything beyond law, it cannot be a compound at all. The Self [Atman] of man being beyond the law of causation is not a compound. It is ever free and is the Ruler of everything that is within law. It will never die, because death means going back to the component parts, and that which was never a compound can never die. It is sheer nonsense to say It dies.”⁹¹

According to the Indian thinkers our Essential Self the Atman is a necessary entity, Self-existent, and uncaused that cannot not-be, since it is the very nature of the Atman that It always exists. For the Atman, existence-thatness (*esse*) and essence-whatness (*essentia*) are inseparable.

Origen mentioned, “The heavenly powers are incorruptible immortal; undoubtedly therefore the substance of the soul of man will also be incorruptible and immortal.... every existence which has a share in that eternal nature must itself also remain forever incorruptible and eternal.” The Trinity and the soul of humans “are of one substance.”⁹²

It was explained by Gregory of Nyssa that, “Immortality is a prerogative of man’s nature through his being made in the image of God.” “Since one of these goods which are proper to the Divine nature is eternity, it was altogether necessary that the constitution of our nature be not without its share in this too but possess within it the note of immortality that through its innate power it might come to know the Supreme Being and desire the Divine eternity.”⁹³

Lutheran and Reformed Scholastics of the 16th and 17th centuries affirmed that a spiritual entity is immortal “being immaterial and simple, is not subject to the dissolution that affects all material and complex substances. Thus the soul (*anima*) is immortal, not only by grace, but by its own nature. This immortality of the soul is not, an absolute immortality” since it “could be destroyed by God, indeed, would cease to be without the continuing providential support of God. The soul is immortal in the sense that it cannot be destroyed or dissolved by finite or secondary causes.” Only the Divine Essence is absolutely immortal and Self-existent. It is the very nature of God that He is a Necessary Being who must exist. God is “*ens a se*: being from Itself; i.e., Self-existent, necessary, noncontingent being.”⁹⁴

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